

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-8, 12 and 14-18 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 2, 9-11 and 13 are cancelled and claim 1 is amended. Support for the amendment to claim 1 can be found, for example, in original claim 2. No new matter is added. In view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks, reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 CFR §1.116 since the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) do not raise any new issue requiring further search and/or consideration since the amendments amplify issues previously discussed throughout prosecution; (c) do not present any additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of finally rejected claims; and (d) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. The amendments are necessary and were not earlier presented because they are made in response to arguments raised in the final rejection. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication that claims 2 and 9-13 contain allowable subject matter.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 3-8, 12 and 14-18 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over U.S. Patent No. 6,106,761 to Sjoberg et al. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

By this amendment, claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 2, which the Office Action indicates is allowable. Accordingly, claim 1 is now allowable. Claims 3-8, 12 and 14-18 depend from claim 1, and thus are also allowable.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 3-8, 12 and 14-18 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over WO 97/10936 to Sjoberg et al. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

By this amendment, claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 2, which the Office Action indicates is allowable. Accordingly, claim 1 is now allowable. Claims 3-8, 12 and 14-18 depend from claim 1, and thus are also allowable.

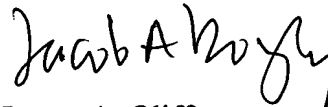
Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are respectfully requested.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1, 3-8, 12 and 14-18 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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